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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 000809

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PM](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: PRC PROTESTS DOD CHINA MILITARY POWER REPORT

REF: STATE 28316

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Ben Moeling. Reason  
s 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Reading unenthusiastically from prepared remarks, MFA DG for North American and Oceanian Affairs Zheng Zeguang formally protested to the A/DCM DOD's annual report to Congress on China's military power. Zheng criticized the report as containing "erroneous and unfounded" accusations that have undermined U.S.-China relations. China will continue to pursue "peaceful development" and has legitimate needs to build its military for national security purposes, Zheng claimed. The Taiwan portion of the report triggered a recitation by Zheng of China's standard talking points, followed by the assertion that China handles disputes through consultation and in accordance with international law. Zheng closed with a complaint that the report had come out when Washington and Beijing have a "stable and good beginning" for relations under the new U.S. administration, arguing that we need to "eradicate the negative impact" of the report to reduce the damage done to the bilateral relationship, particularly mil-mil relations. The A/DCM pointed out that the report is mandated by Congress, and encouraged China's responsible participation in world affairs and increased military transparency. The A/DCM reiterated the U.S. commitment to our one China policy. End Summary.

ATMOSPHERICS SUGGEST MFA NOT ENTHUSIASTIC  
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¶2. (C) MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Department Director General Zheng Zeguang called in the Acting DCM March 26 to discuss the 2009 DOD report to Congress on China's military power. Acting POL M/C and Assistant Naval Attache accompanied the A/DCM. Zheng stated that "last year I did this with your predecessor after the 2008 report was released, and now I get to do it again." Zheng spoke in English but worked from a text prepared in Chinese. Zheng's delivery was quiet and unemotional, and in setting up the meeting, the MFA U.S. Division Director made a point of telling Acting POL M/C that "we have to do this, let's just get it out of the way so it will not be an issue when we are working on our leaders' meeting."

POINT ONE: CHINA NOT HAPPY WITH THE REPORT  
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¶3. (C) Zheng said that before DOD issued the report, the Chinese government had discussed the issue with USG officials in Beijing and Washington, urging the USG to stop issuing these reports and disseminating "untrue theories" of the China military threat. Zheng criticized the report for

containing "erroneous and unfounded accusations against China," and for criticizing China's "legitimate and normal" defense buildup. Zheng said the report's discussion of the PRC military threat against Taiwan is "rhetoric that serves as an excuse for the United States to continue to sell arms to Taiwan."

14. (C) Zheng protested what he described as the report's claims that China is projecting power to ensure access to resources and enforce claims to disputed territories, as well as the report's "irresponsible remarks about China's naval strategy." The report has "seriously violated" the norms guiding international relations and the three Sino-U.S. joint communiques and undermined both the overall bilateral relationship and strategic trust between our two countries, Zheng stated.

#### POINT TWO: CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT "PEACEFUL"

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15. (C) China's adheres to a "peaceful development policy," Zheng continued, and will continue to pursue a security policy that is defensive in nature. China has all along been "a strong force safeguarding peace and stability in Asia Pacific and the world."

16. (C) Zheng advised that China is a sovereign country with 22,000 km of land borders and also 18,000 km of coastline. To safeguard national security and territorial integrity, China needs to continue its defense buildup. "This is the solemn right and responsibility for any sovereign country in

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the world." China will not participate in any arms race, and neither will it pose a threat to any country, Zheng declared.

It is "erroneous and unacceptable" for the United States to continue the annual practice of using the report to disseminate and spread the idea of a "China threat."

#### POINT THREE: TAIWAN

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17. (C) Zheng reminded the A/DCM that Taiwan is an "inalienable part" of Chinese territory, and that recent months have seen the steady improvement and development of the cross-Straits relationship. He recited the PRC mantra that China will continue to strive for peaceful development of cross-Straits relations on the basis of mutual trust, putting aside disputes, seeking common ground, resolving differences and win-win. However, no matter how the Taiwan Strait situation evolves, China will continue to uphold the one-China principle, oppose Taiwan independence and oppose firmly two Chinas or One China, One Taiwan.

18. (C) Zheng urged the United States to abide by its commitments on Taiwan, adopt the one-China principle, observe the three joint communiques, oppose Taiwan independence and oppose Taiwan's participation in any international organization in which statehood is required for membership. He also urged the United States to stop selling arms to Taiwan and stop official military contacts with Taiwan so as not to hurt the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and U.S.-China relations.

#### POINT FOUR: CHINA IS LAW-ABIDING

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19. (C) Zheng claimed that China "upholds the principle of resolving disputes through consultation and peaceful negotiation on the basis of international law." He urged the United States to "have a clear understanding of China's policy in this regard and rectify the erroneous practice of making irresponsible remarks about China's tactics and policies in dealing with territorial disputes with other countries." He claimed that issuing the report "hurts the trust between China and other countries and creates problems

for peace and stability in the region."

POINT FIVE: NOT NOW, WE'RE DOING SO WELL!

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¶10. (C) Zheng complained that the report was issued "just when we have had a relatively stable and good beginning with the new U.S. administration." He noted the upcoming "high-level exchanges," including the meeting between our two presidents, and said that the current state of relations "did not come about easily and required hard work on both sides."

PERORATION: "ERADICATE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT"  
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¶11. (C) Zheng said China urges the United States "to discard Cold War mentality and biased opinion and view China's foreign and defense policy in an objective and fair manner." China calls on the United States to "stop making irresponsible remarks that hurt mutual trust and cooperation, and stop this practice of issuing the so-called military power report." China also urges the United States "to take immediate actions to eradicate any negative impact on relations as the result of this report. In so doing, the United States can reduce the damage done between our two countries and our two militaries."

DCM RESPONDS  
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¶12. (C) The A/DCM responded that the report is mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2000, and that the report is intended to be factual, descriptive and analytical. It does not attempt to draw conclusions, he said, but is intended to let the facts speak for themselves. He noted that the report discusses weaknesses, as well as strengths, of the PRC's military.

¶13. (C) U.S. policy seeks to establish a positive and cooperative relationship with China, one in which we deepen and strengthen our ties on issues of common interest and

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candidly address differences where they persist, the A/DCM said. He quoted Secretary Clinton's statement that "this is not a one-way effort. Much of what we will do depends on the choices China makes about its future at home and abroad."

¶14. (C) The A/DCM reiterated that the United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful and prosperous China, and encourages China to participate responsibly in world affairs by taking on a greater share of the burden for the stability, resilience and growth of the international system. He noted that despite the welcome development of China's routine publication of defense white papers (the most recent being China's National Defense in 2008 published on January 20, 2009), much more could be said by China about its build-up of strategic nuclear and conventional capabilities. China has left unclear to the international community the purposes and objectives of the PLA's evolving doctrine and capabilities.

¶15. (C) On the subject of Taiwan, the A/DCM restated U.S. policy by declaring that the United States remains committed to our one China policy based on the three joint communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. He said the United States does not support Taiwan independence and believes that cross-Strait issues should be resolved peacefully in a manner acceptable to people on both sides of the Strait, and opposes unilateral actions by either side to alter the status quo across the Strait. He took the opportunity to urge China to work towards a peaceful resolution of its differences with Taiwan. He reminded Zheng that we make defense articles available to Taiwan to allow it to maintain a credible defense as provided for in the Taiwan Relations Act, and urged China to reduce military deployments aimed at Taiwan and to pursue a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

¶16. (C) Showing a bit more spark, Zheng said the United States should recognize that it is "only a member of the international community" and should follow the norms of international relations and respect territorial sovereignty and integrity. He said that the United States should look at China's "legitimate defense buildup" in an objective and fair manner, and discard its Cold War mentality and zero-sum perception of China-U.S. relations. He protested that the Taiwan Relations Act is "a unilateral piece of U.S. legislation. The three communiques signed by the United States constitute the guiding principle for Taiwan policy, not the TRA," he said.

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